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FRENCH'S MINOR DRAMA

The Acting Edition.

THE CHARMS OF MUSIC

Farce in One Act and One Scene

BY

ALEX. H. LAIDLAW, JR.

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast"

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ALEX. H. LAIDLAW, JR.

NEW YORK
T. H. FRENCH
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The above Scenes, mounted, can be seen at 28 West 23d St., New York. Full directions accompany each Scene.

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CHARACTERS.

"The Charms of Music" was first produced at the Madison Square Theatre, New York City, on the afternoon of April 20, 1892, with the following professional cast:

WALTER THORNE, ...	*Mr. Henry J. Bagge.*
VIOLET THORNE, ...	*Miss Grace Huntington.*
EVA THORNE, ...	*Miss Lillian Leach.*
RICHARD DOUGLAS, ...	*Mr. Robert Edeson.*
JOHN (*now* ELIZABETH), ...	*Mr. W. Baker.*
HAMILTON HIRSUTE HAMILTON, .	*Mr. Claude H. Brooke.*

Next produced on the afternoon of April 10, 1894, at the Empire Theatre, New York City, by Nelson Wheatcroft's Empire Theatre Dramatic School, with the following cast:

WALTER THORNE, ...	*Mr. J. H. Bradshaw.*
VIOLET THORNE, ...	*Miss Jessie Fara.*
EVA THORNE, ...	*Miss Augusta Durgin.*
RICHARD DOUGLAS, ...	*Mr. Charles Hahn.*
ELIZABETH, ...	*Miss Alice G. Cleather.*
HAMILTON HIRSUTE HAMILTON, .	*Mr. M. Harlem.*

(NOTE.—It is not necessary for Hamilton to be a musician. The less he knows about music the better, as a *few* random chords or discords will heighten the effect of his scenes.)

New York Herald, April 21, 1892.—"'The Charms of Music' was received with enthusiasm."

New York Herald, April 24, 1892.—"'The Charms of Music' went well enough to justify any stock manager of comedy to purchase it."

New York Evening Sun, April 21, 1892.—"'The Charms of Music' was greeted with roars of laughter. The climax was well worked up and received sounds of applause."

New York Evening World, April 21, 1892.—"The lines really sparkle, and the denouement is extremely clever."

New York Evening Telegram, April 21, 1892.—"Amusing and well received."

New York Sun, April 21, 1892.—"Decidedly comic climax."

New York Press, April 21, 1892.—"Very amusing."

Jersey City Tempest, April 23, 1892.—"Made a hit."

Jersey City Evening Journal, April 21, 1892.—"The farce was well received and caused much laughter and applause."

New York Dramatic News, April 30, 1892.—"A cleverly written farce."

THE CHARMS OF MUSIC.

SCENE.—*Breakfast-room in the* THORNES' *country-house. Early morning. Door* L. C. *and window* R. C., *through which can be seen a country landscape. A door* R. 1 E. *leading into a hall. A door* R. 2 E., *leading into a kitchen. Between the doors is a piano, the top of which is covered with sheet and MS. music. A writing-desk* L., *covered with papers, books, pens, ink, etc. A table,* R. C., *partially set for breakfast, and a cupboard containing dishes in the corner. At least five chairs are placed about the room. A sun-bonnet is on the desk.*

ELIZABETH *is setting a few dishes on the table.*

Enter WALTER THORNE, R. 1 E., *hurriedly. He sees* ELIZABETH *and stops.*

MR. T. How do you like the place, Elizabeth?

ELIZ. I have been in better ones.

MR. T. You don't say so! Do we suit you?

ELIZ. Yes, in some respects.

MR. T. Indeed! Thank you!

ELIZ. You're welcome, Hm! To-morrow's my birthday.

MR. T. (*Absently.*) Yes?

ELIZ. They gave me ten dollars in my last place on my birthday.

MR. T. Yes? If you get ten cents here you may consider yourself lucky.

ELIZ. That's what I thought.

MR. T. Will you hasten with the breakfast?

ELIZ. If I have time; but, Mr. Thorne, if you keep Mr. Hamilton here much longer, you and I must meet as strangers.

MR. T. Elizabeth, you are paid to obey commands, not to give them.

ELIZ. Do you intend to insult me?

MR. T. If you choose. (ELIZABETH *drops a plate and goes out,* R. 2 E., *in a rage.*) Damn the servants!

Enter RICHARD DOUGLAS, R. 1 E.

R. D. Good-morning, Walter!

MR. T. Ah, Dick, good-morning!

R. D. I want to speak to you about a——

MR. T. What's up?

R. D. I must go home to-day.

MR. T. Home? You came here intending to stay for the summer, and now——

R. D. I *must* go.

MR. T. I don't see why.

R. D. To tell the truth, I cannot remain in the same house with Hamilton a day longer. Since I arrived I have been compelled to listen to his comic opera twice daily——

MR. T. Hirsute is a friend of mine, Dick, and I am convinced that he is a genius, whether anybody else thinks so or not. As my guest, he will remain here for the summer.

R. D. For the summer? Poor Eva! Poor Violet! Poor Elizabeth!

Mr. T. And if you consider it necessary to go——

R. D. It is necessary, highly necessary.

MR. T. Then I will not detain you.

R. D. But, Walter!

Mr. T. Hm?

R. D. If your sister answers affirmatively to a proposal of marriage to be brought before her notice by me to-day, what will you do?

MR. T. Do? Why, Dick, I will congratulate you. (*They shake hands.*)

R. D. You will? Thanks, old fellow! You don't know how happy——

Enter VIOLET THORNE, R. 1 E.

VIOLET. Good-morning!

R. D. } Good-morning, Vi!

MR. T. } Good-morning, dear!

VIOLET. I see that Elizabeth has moved the piano, and I am so glad. It must not be put back in the parlor again until the fall.

MR. T. Why not?

VIOLET. Because, when the summer is gone, Mr. Hamilton will be ditto.

MR. T. You adore music, Violet, and yet when I give you an opportunity to listen to a genius, you——

VIOLET. I do like *music.*

Mr. T. That's as much as to say that you do not like Hirsute's playing—I mean *music.*

VIOLET. I confess that I do not. Even company don't stop *him.* The country parson called here yesterday afternoon. To my utter astonishment and to the badly concealed horror of the country parson, Mr. Hamilton Hirsute Hamilton walked serenely into the parlor, sat down at the piano, and played and sang his would-be comic opera, seemingly oblivious of our presence. The parson left shortly after the performance began, and I don't blame him. I was terribly mortified.

MR. T. Don't be hard on Hirsute. He is a first-rate fellow.

VIOLET. He is a first-rate nuisance. It is a poor composer who imagines his compositions to be superior to anything else on earth, and that is Mr. Hamilton Hirsute Hamilton's case exactly.

Mr. T. You never think of his genius.

R. D. (*Ironically.*) The like of his opera has never been heard.

VIOLET. I agree with you. His opera does not lack originality, if it does lack sense. (*Going to piano and taking up MS.*) Here it is. Let me read you a portion of it. (*Reading.*) "It is night. Enter Diana with kerosene lamp. She looks around but does not move. Hurried music. Diana gives a shriek—and—and—bursts ! !"

R. D. Bursts!

Enter ELIZABETH, R. 2 E., *to finish setting the table.*

MR. T. Heavens ! Bursts!

VIOLET. (*Nodding her head in assent and reading MS.*) O—I see—"bursts—into song."

MR. T. (*Relieved.*) Oh !

VIOLET. (*Laying down MS.*) The man's insane.

R. D. Those stage directions are very complete. How is it that he has not come down to practise yet ?

VIOLET. I don't know, I'm sure.

Mr. T. Elizabeth, have you seen Mr. Hamilton this morning ?

ELIZ. I have been waiting for some one to ask me that question. Have I seen him ? I have—in the well.

THE OTHERS. (*Horrified.*) In the well ?

MR. T. (*Hastening out door* L. C.) In the well !

VIOLET. (*Eagerly.*) Elizabeth, was his life extinct?

ELIZ. No, ma'am, it was distinct. I went to get some water this morning, and when I drew the bucket up that musical gymnast was hanging onto it. He'd been in the well all night.

MR. T. (*Rushing in*, L. C.) He isn't in the well.

R. D. Too bad.

VIOLET. (*Resignedly.*) Maybe he's sunk.

ELIZ. He's gone to his room. (*Exit* MR. T., R. 1 E.)

R. D. Why didn't you let him down again, Elizabeth?

VIOLET. Yes, why didn't you?

ELIZ. There's nothing I'd rather do.

VIOLET. You had better go and inquire how he is, Dick.

R. D. (*Going*, L. C., *and lighting cigar.*) Me? He's no friend of mine. Why don't you go?

VIOLET. I? He's no friend of mine, either. You can't smoke in here.

R. D. Then I'll go out.

VIOLET. Don't stay long. Breakfast will be ready in a few moments, and you must have some curiosity to see Mr. Hamilton after his recent performance.

R. D. I confess I have, even though I am not a woman; but, unlike a woman, I can wait. (*Exit* R. D., L. C.)

VIOLET. You had better go, after that delightful speech. (*To* ELIZABETH.) Elizabeth, what are you going to give us for breakfast?

ELIZ. (*Curtly.*) As usual.

VIOLET. For *my* breakfast, you may put a dropped egg on toast. Do you understand?

ELIZ. Oh, yes—a dropped egg on toast. Mrs. Thorne, I am going out this afternoon. If my cousin calls, tell him that I will be back to tea. You are not going to have much for lunch, so you can easily prepare it yourself.

VIOLET. Elizabeth, I have stood this sort of thing long enough.

ELIZ. So have I. I mailed you my resignation yesterday. Did you get it?

VIOLET. I did not. When you leave this morning to do your—er—*shopping*, you need not return.

ELIZ. Very well. (*Going*, R. 2 E.) I wash my hands of you. (*Exit* ELIZ., R. 2 E.)

VIOLET. (*Excitedly.*) If only Walter were here to swear for me! Once we get a servant out here in the country, we are obliged to put up with all sorts of impudence in order to make it convenient for them to stay. (VIOLET *turns suddenly and faces* MR. T. *who enters* R. 1 E.) Walter,

won't you please ask Mr. Hamilton to return to the city? Elizabeth goes to-day. He might as well go at the same time. I can't stand either of them for another day.

MR. T. I will certainly not send him away. I have discovered that he is a distant relative of mine.

VIOLET. I am not at all surprised to hear it; but, if I were you, I wouldn't search for any more of my distant relatives. You might *find* them.

MR. T. Violet, you need not cast any slurs at *my* relatives. You might just as well say that you wish I had never been born, and I will not stand that sort of language. Where's Dick?

VIOLET. Out.

MR. T. Remember what I have said.

(*Exit* MR. T., L. C.)

VIOLET. (*Tearfully.*) Walter! Walter! (*She turns and smiles icily on* MR. H. H. HAMILTON, *who slowly enters*, R. 1 E.) Good-morning, Mr. Hamilton! Have you quite recovered from your—er—chill?

H. H. H. Oh, yes—yes!

VIOLET. I understand that you passed a somewhat restless night.

MR. H. Mrs. Thorne, you were not misinformed. I *was* restless—quite restless.

VIOLET. Did you not find it difficult to get into the well?

MR. H. Not very. I was composing. My imagination had lifted my brains above the clouds, while my feet remained upon earth and wandered helter-skelter at their own sweet will. Mrs. Thorne, where is the— (*Sees piano.*) Why, here is the piano! I have been hunting for it everywhere.

VIOLET. I had it brought in here this morning. You see, Mr. Hamilton, it is very kind of you to *amuse* my company, but it is not absolutely necessary.

MR. H. *Amuse* them? Mrs. Thorne, it is a pleasure for me to educate both you and your friends in the art of music.

VIOLET. But it is hardly worth while for you to put yourself out, and it is such a waste of time.

MR. H. It don't put me out in the least.

VIOLET. (*Aside.*) I wish you were put out.

MR. H. What's that?

VIOLET. I said that you are not easily put out while you are playing.

MR. H. Ah! (*Going to piano.*) Shall I run over my latest composition?

VIOLET. If you don't run *too* far. (MR. H. *plays a few chords.*) That is beautiful! (VIOLET *puts her hands over her ears, and hurries out* R. 1 E. *slamming the door after her.*)

MR. H. (*Stops playing and opens the door.*) It is so difficult to educate a refractory person. She must hear me, anyway. (H. *sits at piano again.* VIOLET *returns and once more closes the door.* MR. H. *sighs, stops playing and examines the music on the piano. Enter* ELIZABETH, R. 2 E., *with a pile of plates.* MR. H. *drums some notes on the piano. As he touches each note,* ELIZABETH *drops a plate upon the table.*) Elizabeth, stop that!

ELIZ. Am I worrying you?

MR. H. You are. (*Pause.*) How would you like to be educated, Elizabeth, so that you could think noble thoughts?

ELIZ. Are *you* educated?

MR. H. I am.

ELIZ. Then I don't think I would like it. You would have more room for thoughts if someone would run a lawn-mower over your head. (*Exit* ELIZ. R. 2 E.)

MR. H. Elizabeth—I—I ——

Enter EVA, R. 1 E.

EVA. Good-morning, Mr. Hamilton! What was that lovely, lovely piece you were playing? Was it by Wagner?

MR. H. No, Miss Thorne, it was by myself.

EVA. (*Innocently.*) I *wondered* what was the matter with it. It seemed rather pretty! Don't you play anything of Wagner's?

MR. H. No!

EVA. Then you have *some* sense, haven't you?

MR. H. I am his rival.

EVA. Really! Are you composing?

MR. H. No, Miss Thorne, I am *trying* to compose.

EVA. Then pardon me for coming in. Interruptions will happen in the best regulated families.

MR. H. I was going to say that myself in a minute.

EVA. I am sorry I took the words out of your mouth.

MR. H. It does not matter. We were two minds with but a single thought.

EVA. Now, Mr. Hamilton, I thought your mind contained more than a single thought—mine does.

MR. H. Miss Thorne, would you object to changing the subject?

EVA. Certainly not. Won't you play that little gem of yours—the one I like so much?

MR. H. I thought you liked them all.

EVA. Oh, no—that is, I don't like them all as well as this particular one—you know it——

MR. H. No—I——

EVA. It goes like this. (EVA *hums a few notes.*)

MR. H. I play nothing as bad as that.

EVA. (*Innocently.*) I am sure you do.

MR. H. It may be the music which I have had published. Would you like to have a copy? (*He takes a piece of music from the piano and hands it to her.*)

EVA. Yes, I might as well. And you have my name on it, too. Thank you. (*Reading.*) "With complaints—no —compliments of the composer?" Is it pretty?

MR. H. Very.

EVA. I think I shall learn to play it.

MR. H. You must. I give you this copy on condition that you play nothing else until you have mastered it; then, when you play for any one, always play this. It is the kind of music that everybody will like, and, should any of your friends wish to buy copies, tell them that they can only get it from me, as the stores refuse to sell it.

EVA. They do? What is the matter with it?

MR. H. I—I——

EVA. And of course you advertise it by giving them all away like this.

MR. H. I don't give them all away.

EVA. No?

MR. H. No. (EVA *sits at piano and begins to play a very slow waltz.*)

EVA. Then how do you get rid of them?

MR. H. I sell them.

EVA. *Sell* them? Who do you think would buy it?

MR. H. Well—I— (*Aside.*) It's a wise composer that knows his own music when it is played by some people. (*Aloud.*) Miss Thorne, that is not a funeral march—it is a waltz.

EVA. A *waltz?* Why, so it is. I *did* think it was something else.

MR. H. I thought you did. You must not play it like that again.

EVA. I won't.

MR. H. I hope so, Eva.

EVA. Sir! I am Miss Thorne to *you.*

MR. H. I know it. Listen to me!

EVA. I am listening to you.

Mr. H. So you are—sorry to trouble you, but—er—er—some one is coming!

Enter R. D., L. C.

Eva. I'm glad of it.

R. D. What—the ghost of Mr. Hamilton! Glad to meet you.

Mr. H. Mr. Douglas, your little joke is not at all witty. Up to last accounts I was alive and well.

R. D. Then it is really you, Hamilton? My dear fellow, how is your opera this morning?

Mr. H. Very well, thanks. How's your tooth-ache?

R. D. It's better since the music stopped.

Enter Eliz., R. 2 E. R. D. *and* Eva *converse and go to their seats at the table.* *Enter* Violet, R. 1 E.

Violet. Mr. Hamilton, that last sonata of yours was lovely. Your music sounds so low when I am upon the top floor.

Mr. H. Does it?

Violet. Yes, you must admit that distance lends enchantment in some cases. (*Going to her seat at the table.*) Elizabeth, you may serve breakfast. (*Exit* Eliz., R. 2 E.)

Eva. Come, Mr. Hamilton, your breakfast will get cold.

Mr. H. I am going to be self-sacrificing and play while you eat.

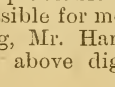
Eva. Please don't.

R. D. Don't! By unanimous request.

Eva. We would a great deal rather have you come and eat your breakfast in a peaceable manner.

Violet. It is impossible for me to even think of eating when you are playing, Mr. Hamilton. Your technique elevates my thoughts above digestibility, and I would starve.

Mr. H. (*Going to his seat.*) I succumb.



1. Mr. T. 2. H. H. H. 3. Violet. 4. Eva. 5. R. D.

The Others. (*Relieved.*) Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

Eva. Where's Walter?

MR. T. (*Entering* L. C. *and going to his seat.*) Here I am.

R. D. Pass the biscuits, Violet!

VIOLET. (*Passing plate to* R. D.) With pleasure.

MR. T. Can I trouble you for the biscuits, Eva?

EVA. (*Passes dish to* MR. H., *who takes biscuit and passes remainder to* MR. T.) Yes, sir, you may trouble me.

VIOLET. (*Passing another dish.*) I made these doughnuts myself. Will you have one, Walter?

MR. T. No, please.

VIOLET. Mr. Hamilton?

MR. H. I never eat them.

VIOLET. Eva?

EVA. No thank you, Violet dear.

VIOLET. Dick?

R. D. I cannot allow them to go begging. I will try one. (R. D. *takes a doughnut.*)

MR. T. May you live long afterward.

VIOLET. That's mean of you, Walter. They are very nice. Take another, Dick. I can't eat them all.

R. D. No, I think that one will be sufficient.

VIOLET. You are not at all complimentary.

EVA. Are you helping Mr. Hamilton down there, Walter? Don't let him starve!

MR. T. (*As* MR. H. *takes another biscuit.*) Hirsute is helping himself.

Enter ELIZ. *with meat on plates which she places before each one.*

VIOLET. Have some coffee-beans, Dick?

R. D. Anything to oblige.

VIOLET. That's the nearest we can come to coffee this morning, thanks to Mr. Hamilton's falling into the well.

MR. H. You're welcome. Encore the biscuits.

EVA. (*As* MR. HAMILTON *takes another biscuit.*) Another biscuit, Mr. Hamilton? Your food is not so ethereal as I had imagined.

MR. T. This is a model breakfast—coffee-beans and doughnuts to begin with. What next? Hash, I'll warrant.

VIOLET. Wrong, as usual. It's steak.

MR. T. Mrs. Thorne, we have indulged in steak for breakfast every day for the last two months.

VIOLET. You may have the egg that I ordered for myself.

MR. T. I see you, too, want to get away from the steak.

VIOLET. Why, you told me that you adored steak.

MR. T. That was when we were married, three years ago, and you must remember that I have had a steady diet of it since then, and you ought to know yourself that "Familiarity breeds contempt."

VIOLET. But there was a large steak in the larder this morning, and there was no use in letting it go to waste.

MR. T. That's no excuse for letting it go to *my* waist.

VIOLET. What will you have, Dick—cider?

R. D. If you please.

EVA. There is none, Violet. We finished it last night.

R. D. Then I do not wish any. Give me the demijohn after breakfast, and Eva and I will walk down to Muggins's and have it filled.

ELIZ. (*To* R. D.) Which will you have, apple, lemon, or cocoanut?

R. D. Pie?

ELIZ. Yes.

R. D. Apple. I see that when in New England, you do as the New Englanders do. Pie and doughnuts for breakfast, and all that sort of thing.

ELIZ. (*To* EVA *and* VIOLET.) Which will you have, apple, lemon, or cocoanut?

EVA and VIOLET. Pie?

ELIZ. Yes.

EVA. Lemon.

VIOLET. Where is that dropped egg on toast, Elizabeth?

ELIZ. I dropped the egg according to your orders, but the devil himself couldn't scoop it up onto a bit of toast.

VIOLET. (*In amazement.*) Elizabeth! (*The others laugh.*)

MR. T. Ask the hen to lay another. Please pass the pepper.

EVA. How do you want it—verbally?

ELIZ. (*To* MR. T. *and* MR. H.) Which will you have, apple, lemon, or cocoanut?

MR. T. and MR. H. Pie?

ELIZ. Yes.

MR. T. and MR. H. Cocoanut. (*Exit* ELIZ., R. 2 E.)

VIOLET. Elizabeth has discharged me. She leaves at noon to-day.

EVA. It is time that she did something. (*A noise* R.)

VIOLET. There's more Chinese music in that kitchen. That girl has broken more dishes than she is worth, and her excuses are always the same—"The wind blew it off the shelf," or "It just came apart in my hands." (*Enter* ELIZ., R. 2 E.) What did you break this time, Elizabeth?

ELIZ. Me? I broke nothing. I picked up a dish and it just came apart.

VIOLET. I thought so. (MR. H. *rises and hurries to the piano.*)

MR. T. What's the matter, Hirsute?

MR. H. I have an idea.

R. D. Don't murder it.

EVA. Let the poor thing go.

MR. T. It seems to me that there are two kinds of steak for breakfast — the kind *you* get and the kind I *don't* get.

VIOLET. There is your steak on your plate, Walter!

MR. T. That spot! Elizabeth, if it is absolutely necessary that I should eat steak, you ought to know by this time that I like it rare but not scarce. (*Exit* ELIZ., R. 2 E., *with* MR. T.'s *plate.* VIOLET *begins to grow hysterical.*)

EVA. Don't exercise your incompatibility of temper, Walter. That's what people get a divorce with.

VIOLET. How do you find *your* steak, Dick?

MR. T. Tell her you don't know how to find it.

VIOLET. Walter, a little of some things goes a great way.

MR. T. And this breakfast has gone far enough—dropped eggs—minute steak—coffee-beans—pie— (VIOLET *rises, wrings her hands and sobs.*) If my mother were only here she'd cook meals that would *be* meals.

VIOLET. And if *my* mother were here—— (MR. T. *rises.*)

MR. T. *Your* mother? No, thanks!

(*Exit* VIOLET, R. 1 E.)

EVA. Don't be a crank, Walter! Don't you see how you have made Violet cry? (EVA *and* R. D. *rise.*)

MR. T. I'm not a crank.

EVA. Cranks never think that they are.

MR. T. I'll take my meals out in the future.

EVA. With the other pigs?

Enter ELIZABETH, R. 2 E. *Seeing no one at the table she begins to clear it, putting some dishes in the cupboard and taking some out,* R. 2 E. MR. H. *plays the piano softly.* MR. T. *stands before piano lost in thought, while* R. D. *and* EVA *converse at the opposite side of the room.*

R. D. Eva, we have known each other for—how many years has it been?

EVA. (*Starting.*) Hm! Several!

R. D. Yes, for many, many years.

EVA. Oh, not as long as that.

R. D. (*Indicating* MR. H.) I am going away to-day on account of that.

EVA. I wish I could go too, for the same reason.

R. D. Will you go with me? to be my wife?

EVA. (*Frightened.*) Oh, Walter!

MR. T. Hm?

EVA. Nothing. Never mind. I thought—I saw—a mouse.

R. D. *I* can kill a mouse. Don't call Walter for a little thing like that.

MR. T. *has been growing impatient, and casting a look of disgust at* MR. H., *turns from the piano.*

MR. T. Come along, Dick. Hirsute wants to play to Eva.

EVA. No, he doesn't.

MR. T. I have something to tell you——

R. D. But you forget. (*Exit* ELIZABETH, R. 2 E.)

MR. T. I forget nothing.

R. D. (*Aside to* EVA.) Au revoir, darling! We will continue in our next.

(*Exeunt* MR. T. *and* R. D. *protesting,* R. 1 E.)

EVA. To be *continued!* I hope it will be CONCLUDED. He loves me—I am going to be married.

MR. H. (*Leaving piano and going over to* EVA.) Miss Thorne, you remember this morning I said "Eva" to you, and you said "Sir!" and I said "Listen to me!" and you said you were listening, and I said, "So you are—someone is coming?" Well, somebody *did* come as you saw for yourself, but no one is near us now. (*He seizes her.*)

EVA. Let me go, Mr. Hamilton!

MR. H. I know I am too good for you.

EVA. You are not. I hate you.

MR. H. I mean you are too good for me.

EVA. I know it. Dick! Dick! (MR. H. *releases her and slinks to the piano, where he plays loudly.* R. D. *enters,* R. 1 E., *with a demijohn in one hand and a hat in the other, both of which he holds throughout the following scene.*) I am *so* glad that you have come.

R. D. Are you really? Has the time seemed long without me?

EVA. Mr. Hamilton, will you be kind enough to leave the room? I cannot hear what my cousin is trying to tell me. (MR. H. *looks angrily at* R. D. *and goes out,* R. 1 E.) Go on, Dick!

R. D. Eva, I loved you when we played together as children—I love you still. You have my whole heart.

EVA. *I* have your heart? How can you live without it?

R. D. Because have I not yours in return? Don't leave me heartless by saying no. You do not speak! Does silence give consent? (R. D. *attempts to embrace* EVA, *who pushes him away.*) I thought I was accepted by the way you threw yourself at me when I came in.

EVA. I was only getting away from Mr. Hamilton. He was trying to propose to me.

R. D. Is Hirsute my rival? Answer me! Did you give him any encouragement?

EVA. (*Laughing.*) To *him?*

R. D. Did you give him as much encouragement as you are giving me at present?

EVA. What are you jealous of him for?

R. D. Haven't I a right to be jealous of my rival?

EVA. Not when your rival has such a poor chance of succeeding as Mr. Hamilton has.

R. D. Do you mean it? Eva, my darling! (R. D. *leans forward and kisses* EVA, *who, noticing his hands full, takes his hat away, enabling him to embrace her.*) Will you be my wife?

EVA. Of course I will.

Enter MR. H., R. 1 E.

R. D. Congratulate us, Hamilton—*I* am going to marry Miss Thorne. (MR. H. *staggers.*)

EVA. (*Putting* DICK'S *hat on his head, and taking sunbonnet from writing-desk.*) You will write us a wedding-march, won't you?

R. D. Yes, one of this kind will do. (*Exeunt* EVA *and* R. D., L. C., *singing Mendelssohn's "Wedding March."*)

MR. H. Jilted. I knew I'd be rejected. It was my thirteenth proposal. (*Starting.*) Ah, I have an idea for Act Ten. (H. *hums a tune, and, going to piano, picks up some MS. and waves his arms as though conducting an orchestra.*)

Enter VIOLET, R. 1 E., *with hat on and red parasol in her hand.*

VIOLET. (*Looking at* MR. H. *in alarm.*) He has a fit. (*She rushes to the table, gets a pitcher, and is about to dash the contents over* MR. H. *when he turns and sees her. Both jump and* VIOLET *screams.*) I hope you are feeling better. Do you have them often?

MR. H. Ideas? Yes. This one is from Act Ten.

VIOLET. Act Ten? How fascinating Act Ten must be!

MR. H. It is.

VIOLET. Mr. Hamilton, I wish to speak to you for two minutes—no longer. Will you be kind enough to tell my husband that you have driven me away from the protection of his roof? He will doubtless be pleased to hear it. Your heathenish music has exasperated me to such an extent that I could strangle you. (*She moves toward him.* MR. H. *screams and hastens out,* R. 1 E.) He is gone. I must go too or I shall go crazy. Walter wants my mother-in-law here as cook. *I* want Walter's mother-in-law. The demand for mothers-in-law exceeds the supply. (*Sitting at writing-desk.*) Where's the paper? (*Picks up book.*) What's this? "How to be Happy though Married." (*Opens it eagerly.*) Walter must have bought it. What is this written inside? "A wife, to be truly happy, should not only love her husband, but she should obey him, amuse him, comfort him, cheer him, assist him, teach him, guide him, entertain him, forbear with him, read to him, write to him——" (*She closes book quickly and gazes at the floor as though dazed.*) If that is an extract from this book, the author is a man, and he ought to be burned alive. The idea of putting that in a book with the title of "How to be Happy though Married." (*Taking a sheet of note-paper from the desk, and sobbing to herself, she begins to write, involuntarily uttering some of the words aloud.*) Dear Sir—conduct—genius—bodily—telegram — curdled—grave—(*Folding the letter, she puts it in an envelope, seals and addresses it, and lays it on the table.*) I may never see Walter again! I cannot go and yet I cannot stay. Farewell—Walter—Eva—and so forth! (*Taking her parasol, she goes out,* L. C., *passing window,* R. C. *A moment later* EVA *and* R. D. *enter,* L. C., *from the left.* R. D. *carries the demijohn and* EVA *stands in the doorway, looking* R.)

EVA. Good riddance to Elizabeth. I saw her going across the field, and Violet has just gone out, too. Walter treated her shamefully this morning.

R. D. It wasn't a nice example to set us, was it?

EVA. I'd like to box his ears.

R. D. (*Setting demijohn on table.*) I'll put this confounded cider here for the present.

EVA. All right. (EVA *shakes her hand with outstretched fingers before* R. D.'s *face.*) How will folks know that I am engaged?

R. D. Oh, ho—you want a ring. Wait a day and you shall have one.

Enter Mr. T., r. 1 e.

Eva. Walter, who do you think is going to be married?

Mr. T. You are.

Eva. How do you know?

Mr. T. Come, little sister, let me congratulate you. Dick told me all about it this morning. May you both live long and be happy ever afterward.

Eva. (*Taking* Violet's *letter from table and reading the address.*) "Walter Thorne, Esquire—Present." Here's a present for you, Walter!

Mr. T. (*Takes letter.*) A present? Violet's handwriting! What can it be? (*He opens letter, reads it, and starts.*)

Eva. What is it, Walter? Is anything wrong?

Mr. T. Yes, something *is* wrong. My wife has left me —on account of—Hirsute!

R. D. That's too bad, old boy. She seemed to dislike him so, too.

Eva. To think of Violet eloping with Hamilton! I don't believe it!

Mr. T. Eloped! She has eloped with no one but herself. (*Aside.*) What a brute Hirsute must have been!

Eva. Let me go after her. She cannot have gone far.

Mr. T. No—I can stand it if she can. I will be b—b—brave. (*Reads letter.*) "Mr. Thorne—Dear Sir—I am going for a short walk, never to return. Your frightful conduct in harboring a musical genius between your walls has driven me away bodily to my mother. If he ever goes, send me a telegram, and, if wanted, I will return. I cannot remain where my blood is curdled daily by selections from a would-be comic opera, and where your mother's beefsteak is constantly held before my eyes and ringing in my ears. If I should die before we meet again, I trust that you will have bleeding-hearts planted on my grave, and I should also like to have a monument representing a broken column with the simple inscription —'Violet Thorne—aged 25 years. The Good die young.' (*Enter* Mr. H., r. 1 e.) Hoping that you will not marry again, I remain what Hamilton Hirsute Hamilton has left of what was once your wife."

Mr. H. Your wife writes very well. Has she been getting out a novel?

Mr. T. You are here, Hirsute! Come nearer—I won't hurt you. For a long time I have been trying to cultivate your talents against the wishes of my warmest friends, and

my attempt has proved entirely unsuccessful. You have not improved a particle. If anything, you are worse than ever. My wife has danced, or rather *walked* out of this house to your music. My wife!—do you hear me?—my *wife!!* You have driven her out—now drive yourself out and be thankful you escape so easily.

MR. H. So this is my reward for letting your ears feast upon my masterpieces—this is my payment. I am turned out. I will not go.

MR. T. You will either go in peace or in pieces. You are of age and can take your choice. Pack up your genius, and take it where it belongs.

(MR. H. *takes music from top of piano.*)

MR. H. Miss Thorne, you have witnessed this sad scene. Haven't you anything to say to me?

EVA. (*Without looking at* MR. H.) Yes, good-by! Don't forget the wedding-march.

MR. H. Ah, I see—you are engaged in another direction.

R. D. Exactly! Ta-Ta—Hamilton!

(*Exit* MR. H., R. 1 E.)

EVA. Let me go after Violet, Walter! Come, Dick, you and I will find her. (VIOLET *passes window at back.*)

MR. T. No, when she returns, it must be of her own accord.

EVA. It is really *your* fault.

MR. T. *My* fault! It is Hirsute's!

VIOLET *appears at door*, L. C. *Her hat is out of shape and her parasol and dress are torn and mud-stained. In one hand she carries a large bunch of weeds.*

VIOLET. Walter—Eva—I—I—— (*She staggers in and sinks on the floor.*)

THE OTHERS. Violet!

VIOLET. I have come back to die or to haunt you—I don't know which. It is hard to die while I am so young.

MR. T. The *good* die young.

VIOLET. Have pity on me—pity! Had it not been for Mr. Hamilton and the beefsteak I might now be alive and well.

EVA. Your dress is torn, Violet. Where have you been?

VIOLET. Where have I been? Listen! When I left, the sun was shining, and I put up my red parasol. There was more of it then than there is now. I started to walk across the field, and was about half-way over when I no-

ticed that Jo Smith's bull was also walking in the field. It is probable that my parasol shook, for I trembled all over as the result of my final chat with Mr. Hamilton;—at any rate, the bull became attracted by me and began to walk toward me. I walked the other way—the *bull* walked the other way—I mean *my* way. *I* walked more rapidly—the *bull* walked more rapidly. I ran—the *bull* ran. I reached the fence—the *bull* reached the fence. I got over the fence—the bull did *not* get over the fence—and I was saved—saved!

MR. T. My darling!

VIOLET. Then I fainted. When I came to, Elizabeth was bending over me with my purse in her hand. She said that, after the manner in which she had been treated by me, nothing short of the contents of my purse would satisfy her. Then she disappeared—and I managed to drag myself back.

MR. T. Has Hamilton gone?

MR. H. (*Entering*, R. 1 E., *with hat, bags, and bundles.*) No, Mr. Thorne, but he is going, thanks to your kind interference. I am much obliged for the board and lodging——

MR. T. Don't mention it.

MR. H. But do you not intend giving me some compensation in return for the musical education I have given you?

MR. T. Well, we did not intend giving you anything; but, since you seem to expect it, here are two dollars—go and take a music lesson. (*Offers him money.*)

MR. H. (*Taking the money.*) If you mean this as an insult I will pocket it. Thank you. *Au revoir!* (*Aside.*) I will go and get a hair cut. (*Exit* MR. H., L. C.)

VIOLET. He has gone. May I stay, Walter?

MR. T. You cannot go. Let us make amends.

VIOLET. Lock the piano and give me the key.

MR. T. On one condition—that you do not bring beefsteak into this house oftener than once a month.

VIOLET. (*Pouting.*) Ah—well—I agree. Eva, when you are married, never let your husband bring a genius home.

EVA. I promise. (EVA *walks to window*, R. C.)

MR. T. Dick, never allow Eva to give you beefsteak every day for two consecutive months.

EVA. (*Calling the others.*) There goes Mr. Hamilton across the field. The bull is after him. (*All rush to the window.*) (*From here action must be hurried.*)

MR. T. The bull is speeding the parting guest.

R. D. Hamilton never ran so quickly before.

EVA. The bull is gaining.

VIOLET. They're both gaining.

MR. T. Who cares! If the bull gets him, three cheers for the bull!

R. D. He's got to the fence.

EVA. Who?

R. D. The bull!

MR T. Where's Hirsute?

R. D. Up in the air.

EVA. No. Mr. Hamilton is safe on the other side of the fence. That bundle in the air is—is——

VIOLET. (*Wildly.*) Let me see—it is——

ALL. (*Wildly excited and throwing up their arms.*) Elizabeth!

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